

Harbor Seal Monitoring Updates



8/8/2011

Harbor Seal Counts, weekly

After a great pupping season, it's a little surprising to see our molting season numbers are quite low. This could be an indication of low food supply for the seals so they are spending more time foraging than hauling out or something else could be going on. During the molting season, seals are usually hauling out for extended periods of time to rest while the energetically taxing process of molting is taking place. It is also believed that sunlight helps the hair follicles grow faster. An individual seal can take about two weeks to molt, but different age classes and sexes haul out at different times, which is why the season is over a month long.

In July, the harbor seal numbers increased from June and averaged around 2,000 individuals. The week of July 17th was the peak week with about 2,200 seals recorded. By the end of July, the numbers had decreased to 1,300 harbor seals. Drakes Estero and Tomales Bay had low numbers this molting season; the former due to unknown reasons and the latter due to numerous disturbances by clammers and boats.

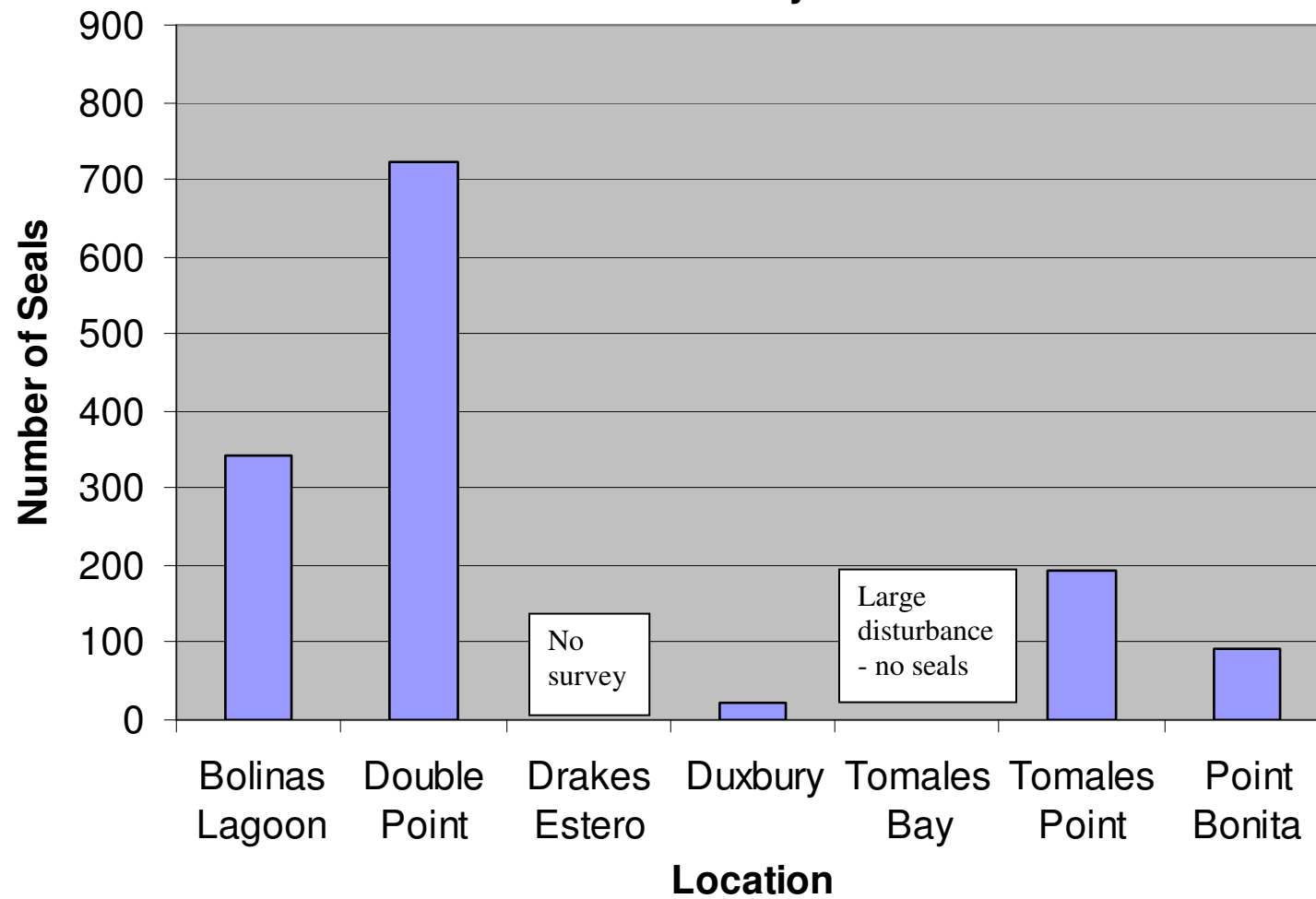
Harbor Seal Counts, regional surveys

There was great effort this month to complete all of the regional surveys. Only Drakes Estero was missed once due to fog (and not for the lack of trying). The peak weekend was July 16th with approximately 2,000 seals recorded in Marin County.

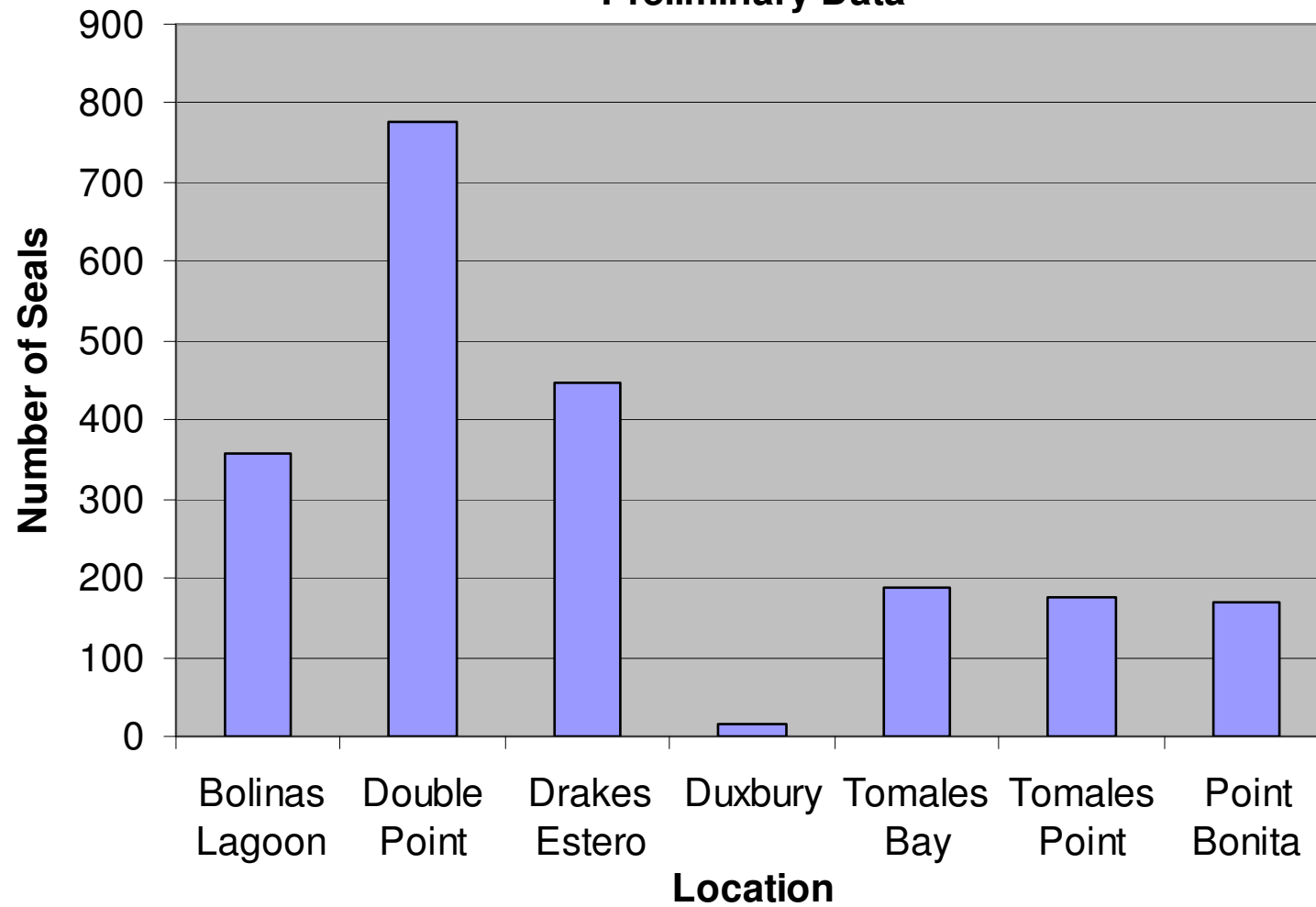


Photo: Seals hauled out at Kent Island in Bolinas Lagoon

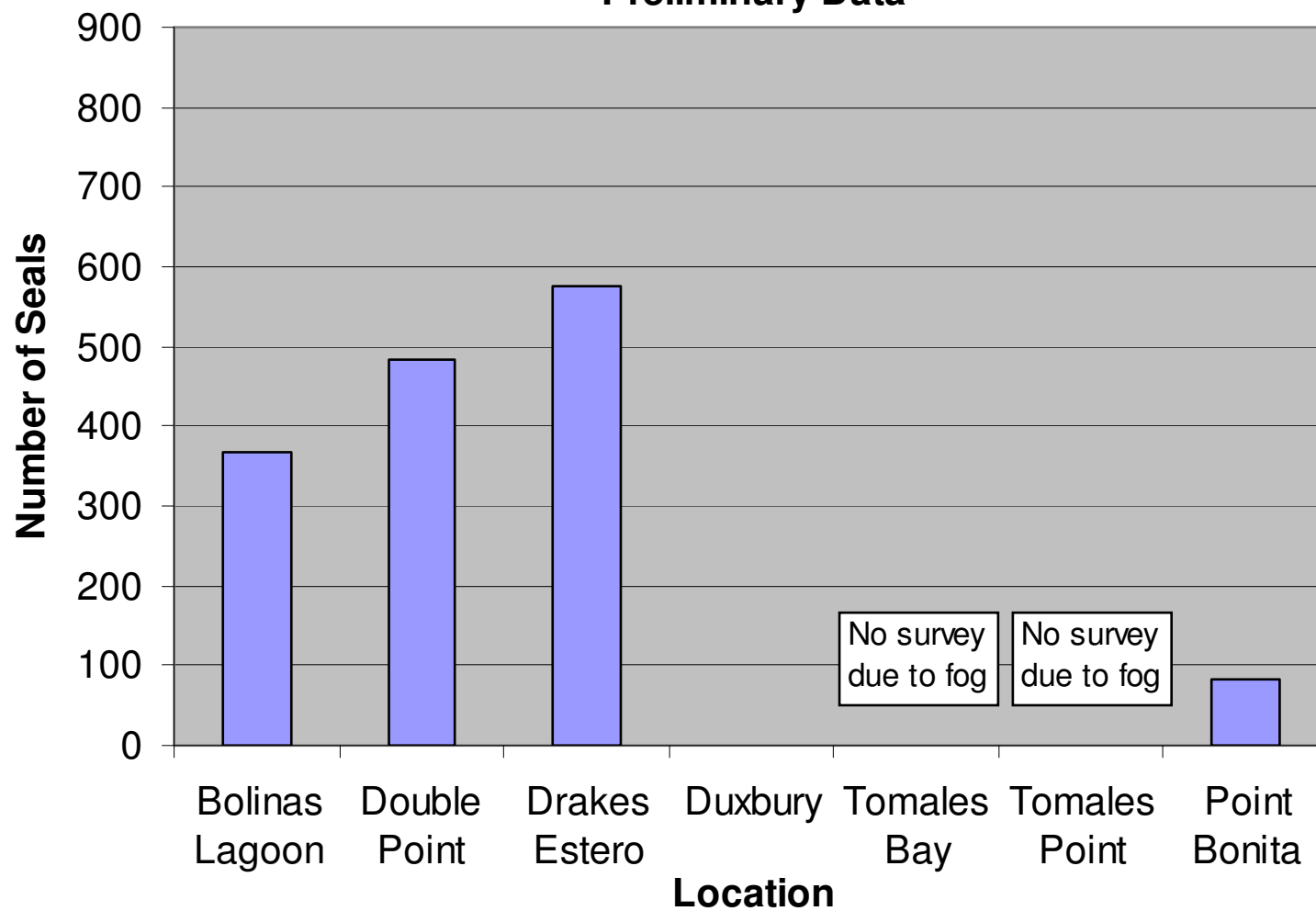
Weekly Summary of Harbor Seal Max Counts (6/26/11 - 7/2/11)
Preliminary Data



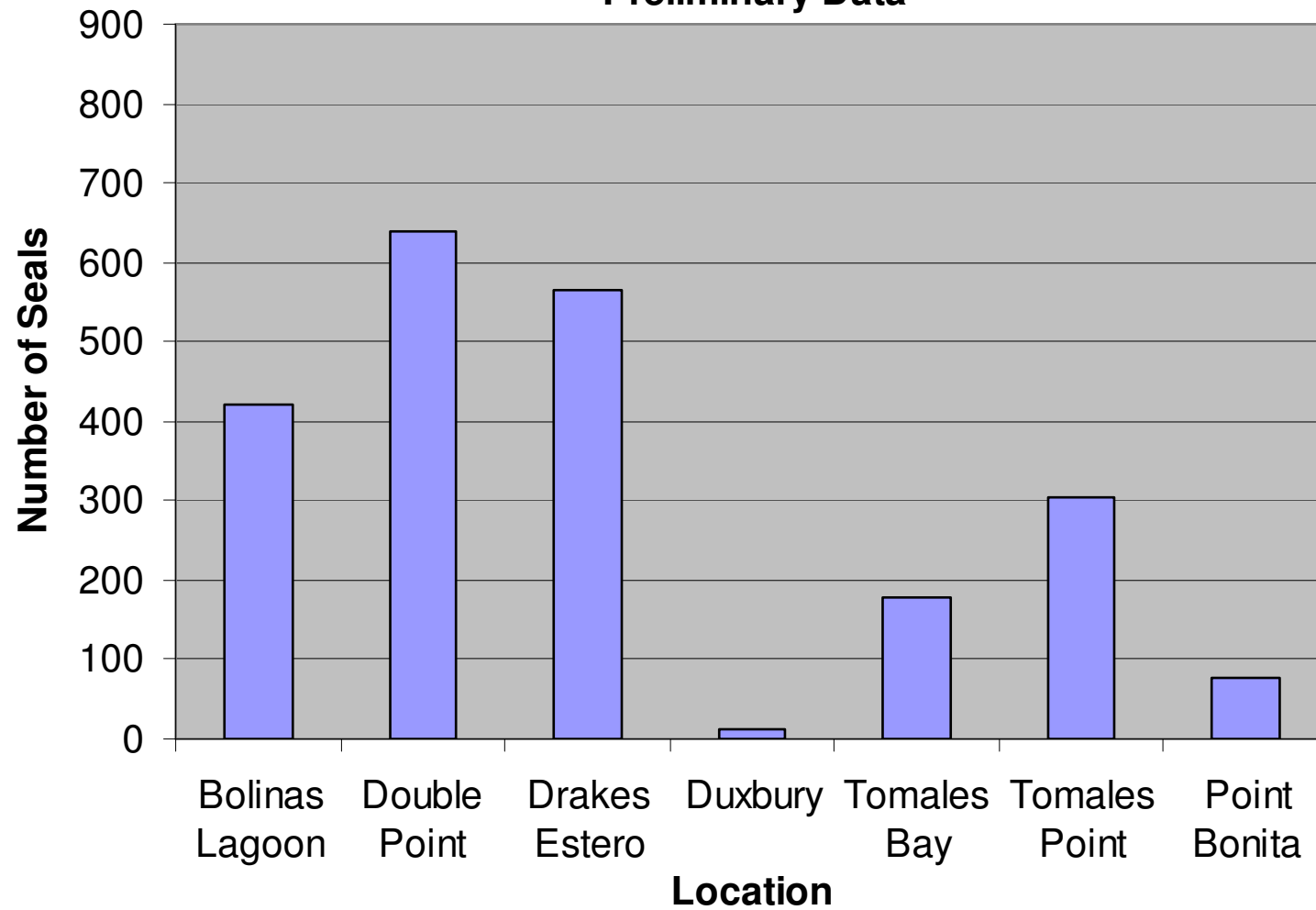
Weekly Summary of Harbor Seal Max Counts (7/3/11 - 7/9/11)
Preliminary Data



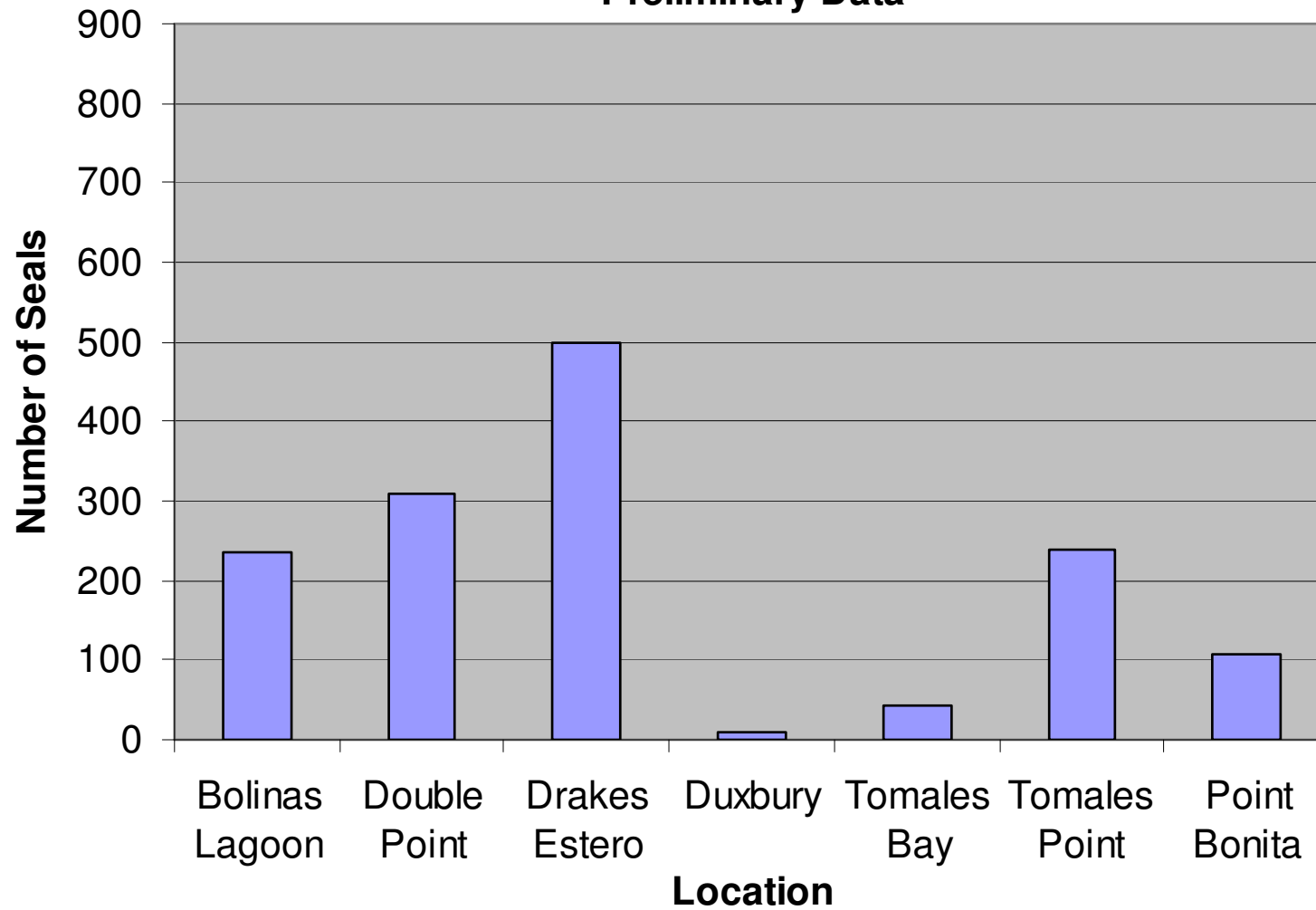
Weekly Summary of Harbor Seal Max Counts (7/10/11 - 7/16/11)
Preliminary Data



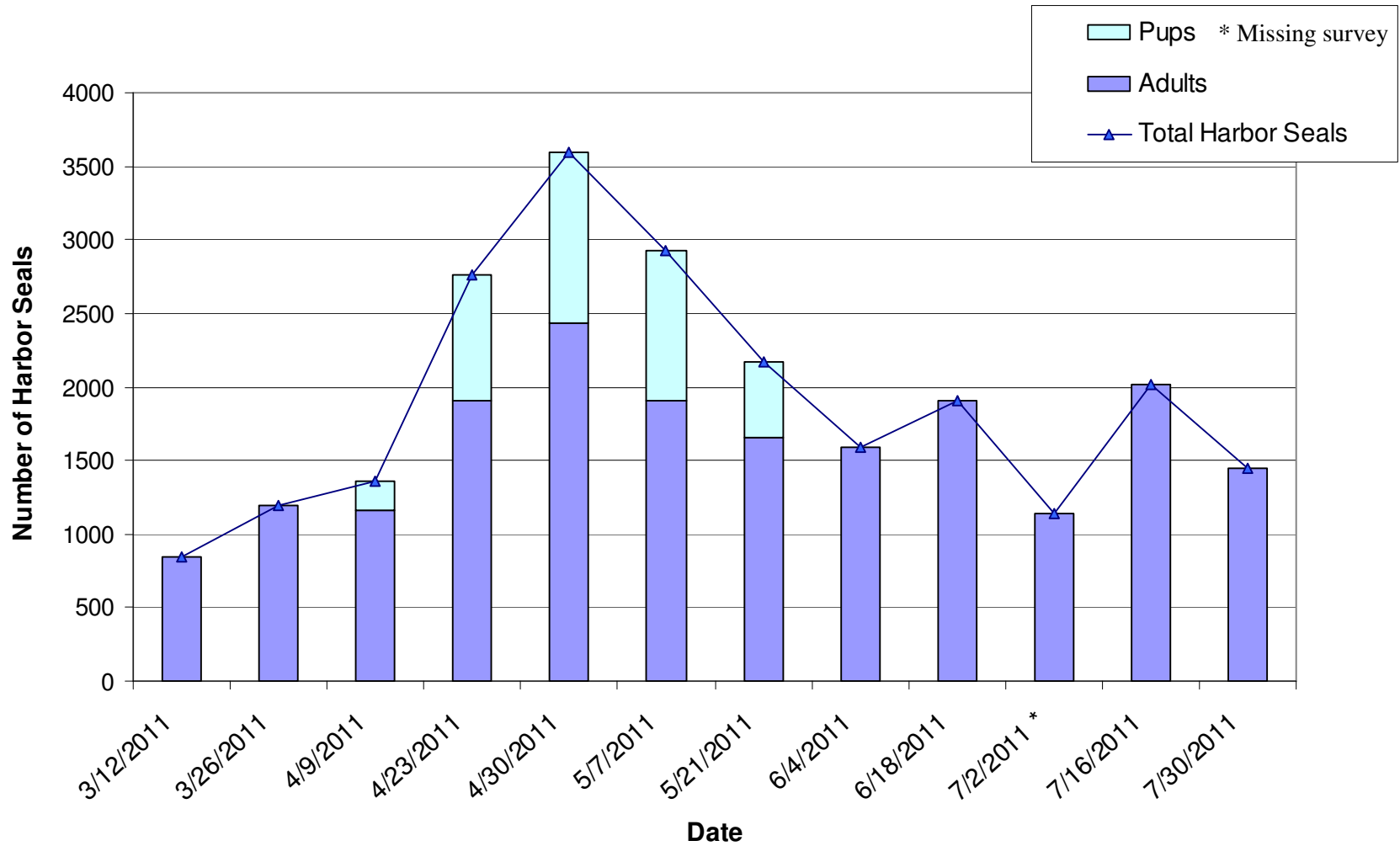
Weekly Summary of Harbor Seal Max Counts (7/17/11 - 7/23/11)
Preliminary Data



Weekly Summary of Harbor Seal Max Counts (7/24/11 - 8/1/11)
Preliminary Data



Regional Surveys of Marin County 2011



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